

V. SIGN GUIDELINES: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL

Signage can have a dramatic effect, either good or bad, on potential customers' or clients' perception of a business. They provide initial introduction to the character and quality of the business. Too many different signs for one business compete with one another and make it difficult to figure out what the business is about, especially for motorists driving by at 30 mph or more. Too many signs can also undermine the overall economic image of a shopping district, making it appear blighted. A consistent approach to signage provides continuity within a shopping districts and improves the readability of individual signs.

The Zoning Regulations establish the basic standards that signage must follow. Signs may not exceed the quantity, area, height, projection over public right-of-way (ROW) and slope specified in the Zoning Regulations. The guidelines in this section describe and provide examples of how signs may be designed within the parameters of the Zoning Regulations to improve their effectiveness for individual businesses and districts.

Different Signs for Different Districts

Pedestrian-oriented districts, composed of a series of storefronts, each 15 to 40 feet wide, along the sidewalk, typically have signs that are oriented to pedestrians as well as motorists - window signs, awning signs, blade signs (small projecting signs) and outdoor dining menu boards - as well as wall and projecting signs oriented to motorists.

In **auto-oriented districts** buildings are setback from the sidewalk, often behind parking lots. Freestanding (pole-mounted) and monument signs may be appropriate. In many cases, auto-oriented uses are located in shopping centers with multiple tenants. The freestanding or monument sign will typically provide the name of the center with the names of individual businesses listed on their individual facades.

Multi-tenant office buildings may find it more practical to treat their address number as their primary sign. Buildings with a group of related, but independent tenants might have a collective name with a descriptive term like Medical Building or Law Offices.

Information Hierarchy

A key to successful signage is to prioritize the information being communicated. A retail business has several messages to convey to their potential customers, including:

- ☐ Business name
- ☐ Address
- ☐ Type of goods and services
- ☐ Specific products and/or name brands carried
- ☐ Credit cards honored

- ☐ Telephone number
- ☐ Parking directions
- ☐ Business hours

Some information - primarily the name and address of the business or shopping center and one or two key products or services - needs to be legible to motorists or bus riders, while most other information can be on smaller signs legible to customers once they become pedestrians.

Sign "blight" occurs when a business has so many signs that a potential customer, whether driving or walk by, is overwhelmed and cannot sort through the information. The information should be organized and presented so it can be understood in order of importance and without repetition. For example, the name of the business is usually the most important piece of information and should be presented on the largest sign, which should be legible to motorists and bus riders. That sign may be a wall sign, awning sign, projecting sign or freestanding or monument sign and is considered to be the "primary" sign. A business should usually have only one primary sign visible along each street or parking lot that it faces.

If a wall sign is the primary sign, containing the business name, then an awning sign and be used as a "secondary" sign, describing the business, listing the goods or services provided or the address, rather than repeating the name of the business. One exception to this rule is the pedestrian blade sign - a small projecting sign (not larger than 5 square feet) perpendicular to the building wall and designed to be visible to pedestrians - which typically repeats the business name or contains its logo. Figure II-14 shows the information that is most appropriate on each sign type.

Letter Size

Letter style and capitalization affect the visual impact of a sign. To reflect the individuality of each business and to create interest, a variety of type styles and capitalization can be used. Figure V-1 suggests variations in sign size with different type styles and capitalization.

Multi-Tenant Buildings

When a building has multiple ground floor tenants, whether in a storefront building along a sidewalk or in a strip mall behind a parking lot, the individual tenants' signs should share some common design elements to make them more legible to potential customers, specifically: placement on the facade and size. Letter style, colors and, in some cases, materials may vary to reinforce the individual identity of each tenant.

When multiple tenants share a single entry, they are encour-

aged to adopt a single collective name and sign program to avoid creating an illegible jumble of competing signs.

Sign Construction and Lighting

Individual letters, including 3-dimensional letters with an internal neon light source, neon or dimensional cut-out metal or plastic letters are encouraged. Cut-out letters may be mounted on a raceway to facilitate changes or may be individually pin-mounted. Figure II-16 suggests techniques for how to light signs.

Rectangular sign cabinets are discouraged, although sign cabinets with a distinct curvilinear form are allowed.

Signs Legible to Motorists and Bus Riders

For a single business or shopping center, only one of the following types of primary signs, providing the name of the business and one or two principal products and services, should be completely visible from a single location:

- ☐ **Primary Wall Sign**
- ☐ **Primary Awning Sign**
- ☐ **Major Projecting Sign**, which should be non-rectangular and have its own internal or external light source.
- ☐ **Freestanding Pole Sign or Monument Sign**, which should be mounted to a base whose material and/or color and finish is used on the building with its own internal or external light source.

A business should show its **address** in 4 to 6-inch letters within 4 feet of an entry on each facade that has an entry.

The primary sign on the rear facade should be 75% of the area of the primary sign on the front facade.

In addition to the primary sign(s) and address, a business may have the following secondary signs describing the business and/or listing 1 or 2 products or services provided:

- ☐ **Secondary Wall Signs**
- ☐ **Secondary Awning Signs**, in which the information should be confined to a single horizontal line positioned within 3 inches of the bottom edge of the awning and the maximum letter size is 6 inches.
- ☐ **Menu Boards**, permitted only for drive-through fast-food restaurants (1 wall and 1 freestanding menu board for each auto service window), which are less than 40 square feet in area, less than 7 feet in height, oriented to customers on site, and list only the business name and price of each item in maximum 3" letters.

Signs Legible to Pedestrians

All other signs should be designed to be viewed by pedestrians on the sidewalk or in the parking lot adjacent to the building.



A primary wall sign contains the name of the business on the wall.



A primary wall sign contains the name of the business.



A major projecting sign (El Toreo Cafe) as well as several smaller pedestrian blade sign (also projecting signs).



A freestanding pole sign.

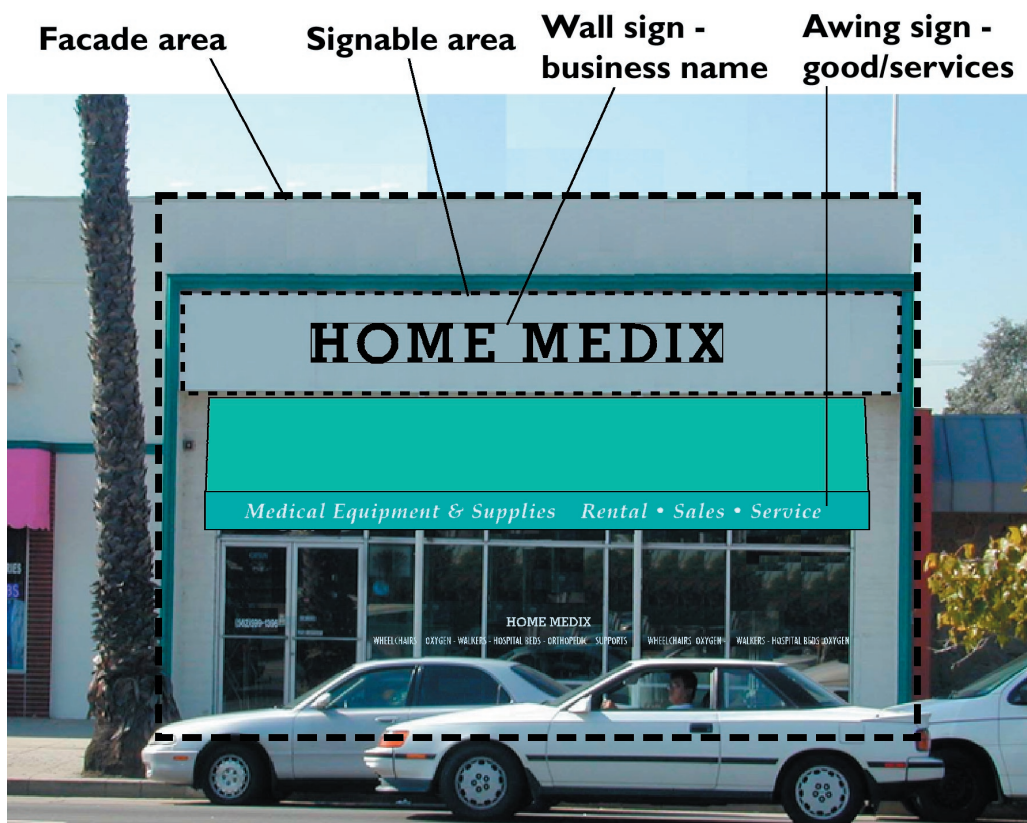


A monument sign.

Figure V-1 Recommended Sign Hierarchy

| SIGN TYPE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|------|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|-------------|---------------|--|--|
| | Max. Number | Wall | Freestanding/ Monument | Projecting | Awning, Marquee/ Canopy, Pylon | Window | Blade | Directory | Menu Board* | Backdrop Wall | | |
| Business name - primary sign and should be most visible | 2 | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ | | | | | |
| Brief (4-6) word description | 1 | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ | | | | | |
| Address number | 2 | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| Parking information | 1 | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ OR | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| Business hours & phone number: | 1 | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Credit cards honored | 1 | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Brand names carried or goods and services offered | 1 | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Secondary tenant names or names of upper-level tenants | 1 | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Sales | 1 | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Restaurant menus | 1 | | | | | ✓ | | OR | ✓ | | | |

* Permitted for drive-through fast food restaurants only



- ❑ **Window Signs**, which cover up to 10% of the windows.
- ❑ **Blade Sign**, which is a projecting sign less than 5 square feet in size, as illustrated in Figure V-4.
- ❑ **Directory Signs**, listing the tenants on an upper floor or with access from a single entry, which may be up to 18 square feet in size.
- ❑ **Backdrop Wall Signs**, on the rear or the side of a open display business that do not exceed 5% of the area of the wall on which they are located.

Sign Color

Sign Color and Finishes should relate to those of the building. Signs may use any of the 3 to 5 colors permitted for the building exterior plus 3 additional colors for a total of 8 colors. Signs must use at least one of the building colors.

Sign Maintenance

All exterior signs should be kept clean and properly maintained. All supports, braces, anchors and electrical components should be kept safe, presentable and in good structural condition. Defective lighting components should be replaced promptly. Weathered and/or faded painted surfaces should be repainted promptly.



Window signs include: name, open/closed, major products provided, and address.



Window signs do not interfere with displays in the window.

Figure V-2 Effect of Letter Style and Capitalization on Sign Size

Thin letters can be 10% larger than thick letters:

STARDUST JEWELERS
STARDUST JEWELERS

Initial capitals with lower case letters can be 5% larger than all capital letters:

STARDUST JEWELERS
Stardust Jewelers

Thin initial capitals with lower case letters can be 15% larger than thick, all-capital letters:

STARDUST JEWELERS
Stardust Jewelers

These examples excerpted from:
Bixby Knolls Design Guidelines
The Arroyo Group

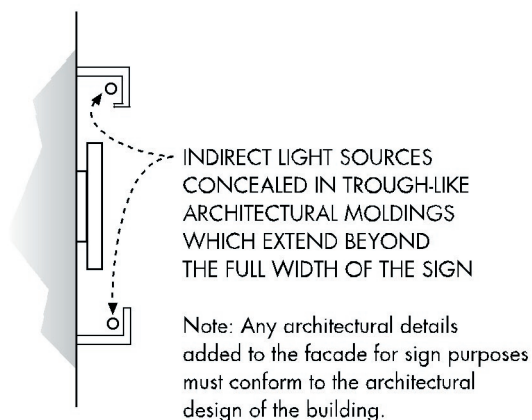
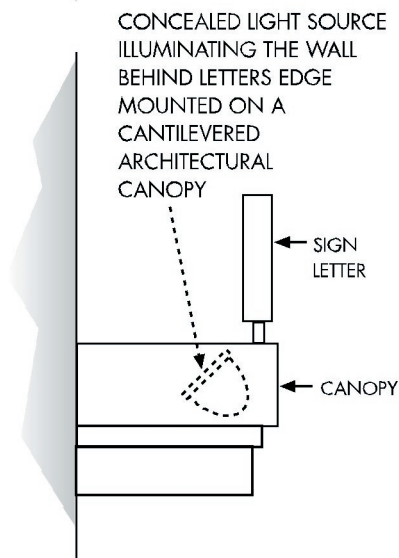
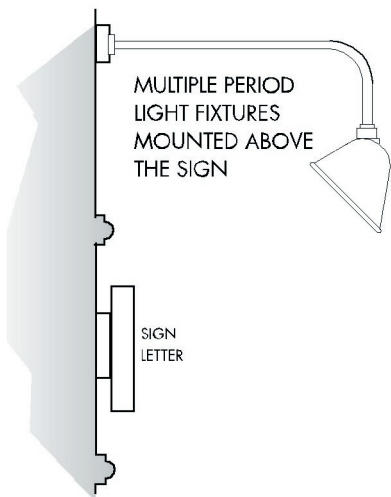


Blade signs: above left shows clearance over sidewalk; above right shows clearance over alley.

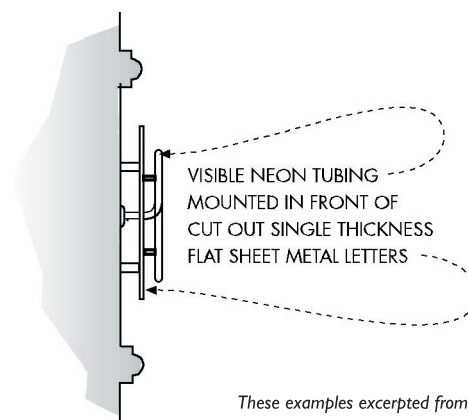
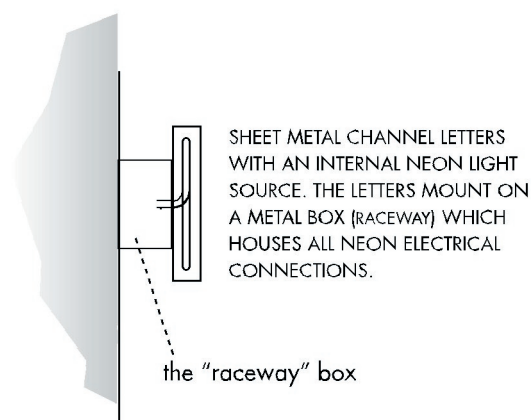
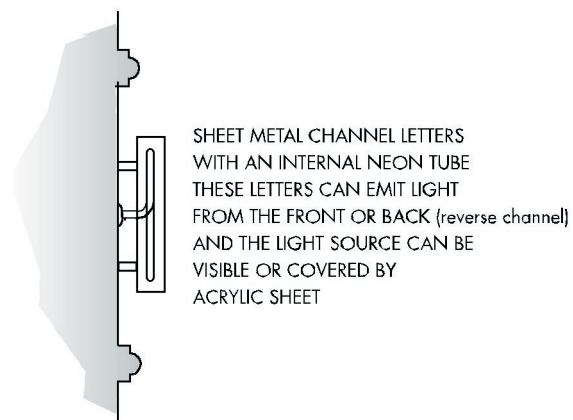
Directory sign located on exterior wall along sidewalk lists upper level tenants.

Figure V-3 Sign Lighting Techniques

Examples of externally lighting multiple letters

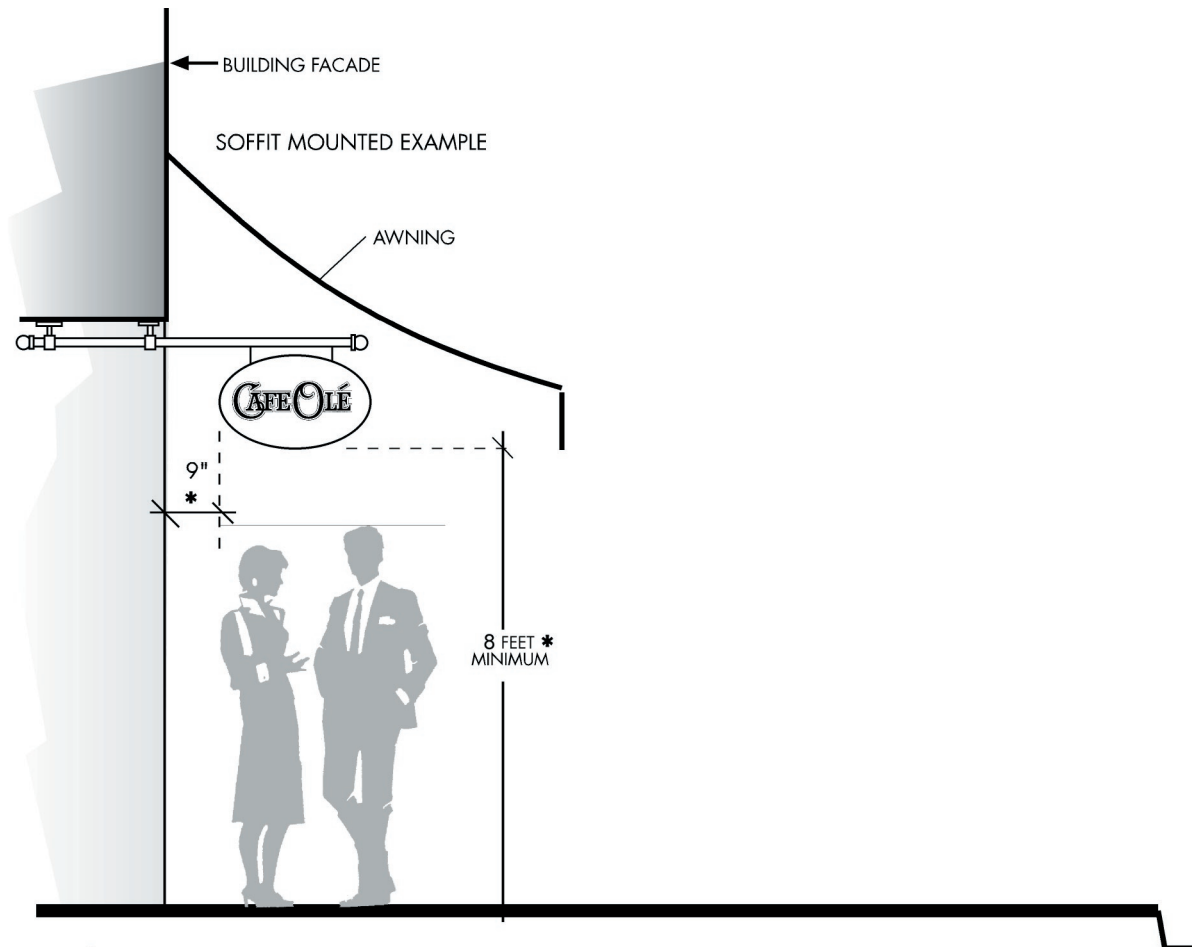


Examples of lighting each letter with an integral neon light tube.

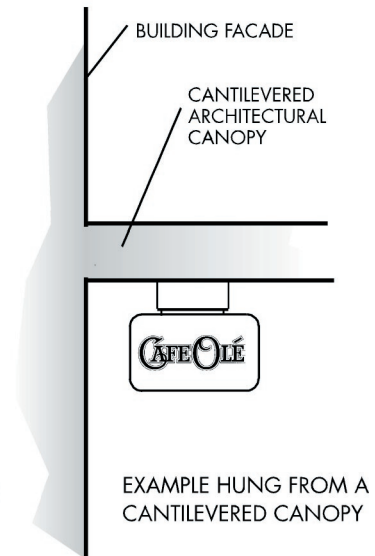
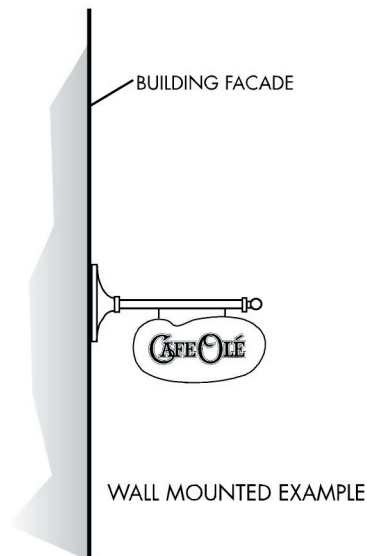
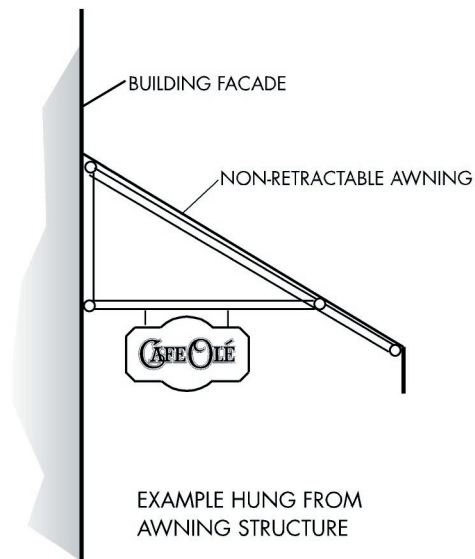


These examples excerpted from:
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The Arroyo Group

Figure V-4 Pedestrian-Oriented Blade Signs



* These dimensions must be followed to maintain visual harmony between adjacent facades



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The Arroyo Group